

*Los Angeles City Hall Museum of the Los Angeles  
Foundation Catalogue*

**Three**

**Graphic Artists**

Charles White

David Hammons

Timothy Washington

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Sincere thanks are extended to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Technical Services staff, headed by James Allen; to the Photography Laboratory directed by Ed Cornachio; to the Registrar's Office headed by Mrs. Gloria Cortella; to Vincent Robbins and Richard Hattori of the Graphic Design Department; to the staff of the Exhibitions and Publications Department; to Mrs. Annette Epstein, Secretary to the Department of Prints and Drawings for multitudinous duties; and to Joseph E. Young, the Department's Assistant, for his comprehensive and illuminating catalog. Finally, the Department is profoundly grateful to the Director and the Board of Trustees for making the exhibition and catalog possible.

## Foreword

It is a pleasure for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to present *Three Graphic Artists*, an exhibition which juxtaposes traditional and contemporary techniques in a most arresting and compelling manner. The power of these three black artists, each represented by a distinctive style, resides in their profound human concern and their vigorous, often novel, search for forceful means of expressing it in graphic language.

Striking among the phenomena of our times are the inexhaustible "new ways of gravure" which have enabled printmaking to emerge as one of the most dynamic art forms of the twentieth century. Printmaking has, throughout its history, lent itself to radical development and innovation thanks to the sculptural and chemical aspects of its processes. The art of making incisions in a hard surface to remove parts of the material, whether as carving or in decoration, is as old as antiquity. Suetonius tells us that Julius Caesar was an avid collector of "gems and engravings;" but in ancient times engravings meant, as they mean to one of the artists in the present exhibition, metal surfaces designed with an engraving tool. Furthermore, the term "engraving" referred originally to the metal plate and not to the print taken from it.

With the introduction of acid etching in the sixteenth century, printmaking was radically altered from its quasi-sculptural, or carving, technique, preparing for the freedom of Rembrandt. Even more revolutionary was the discovery of lithography, or chemical stone printing, which, in the time of Daumier, changed the face and form of communication and illustration. Today, many artists believe that prints should be three-dimensional, that the use of material is unrestricted, and that techniques and concepts should be governed solely by the creative spirit.

Thus, the unorthodox processes of David Hammons and Timothy Washington reflect the continuing vitality of the metamorphosing world of graphic art. Traditional definitions and categories are not pertinent to the bold, independent techniques of these artists who employ their fresh, striking methods to extend the boundaries of visual impact and emotional stimulus. Hammons' dramatic process of "self-printing" literally involves his whole physical being, while Washington's return to the classical presence of the engraved metal itself is the all-encompassing fact of his intaglio technique.

In contrast to these newer forms of graphic expression stands the monumental work, the quieter drama of the *doyen* of American black artists, the profoundly human Charles White who preserves the image of man in the Renaissance sense and ennoble him with a large and timeless approach. Drawing is the most autographic of all the arts and, as a

medium, requires the most intimate and refined response to be understood and appreciated. It retains the magic of immediacy, whether created in the spontaneity of the initial idea or elaborated into a finished work. White's calm, heroic figures embody the changeless, enduring bedrock of humanity—its age-old sorrows, its redeeming compassion. While the works by David Hammons and Timothy Washington included in this exhibition were all created within the last two years, White's drawings shown here cover a period of some seven years. In his recent drawings, paralleled in terms of complexity by the lithographs he executed at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, the images are woven into a brilliant kaleidoscope of modulated planes and shapes. This break-up of the background field behind his patient figures seems like a symbolic and echoing refraction of their changing human condition.

Ebria Feinblatt

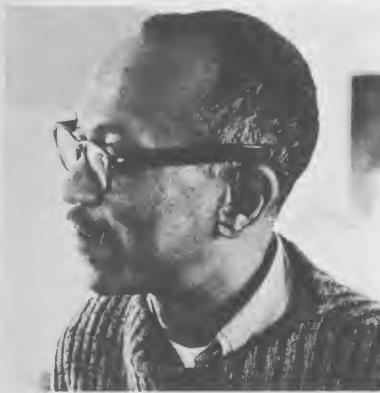
## Three Graphic Artists

"Three Graphic Artists" is an exhibition of prints and drawings by contemporary Los Angeles artists whose productions are often of a public rather than a private nature and whose effectiveness in appealing to a large audience is increased by their utilization of the human figure in their compositions. In spite of their many thematic affinities, each artist has produced works that are easily distinguishable and that bear the unmistakable stamp of but one person. It is this impressive mark of originality which imparts to this exhibition so much of its stirring vitality.

A decisive factor contributing to the selection of these works was their technical and aesthetic excellence. These qualities, in conjunction with their visual impact, enabled them to enter the domain once inhabited solely by painting. Consequently, one is almost tempted to refer to many of the works on view as "paintings," which they are not. Moreover, the formal expression of all three artists has evolved from the *long-standing* tradition of the graphic arts. In this exhibition dry-point is not used to make intaglio prints but is employed to create engravings on aluminum plates. In the same defiance of tradition, oil-based pigments are used to create large-scale drawings on mounted paper rather than oil paintings. And, one artist uses his own body to create unique images which are related to, but differ strikingly from, conventional monoprints.

Another hallmark of this exhibition is the degree to which each artist acknowledges his awareness of man in relation to society and the role of the community in relation to man himself. Although occasionally the traditional device of using a particular contemporary incident to imply the general dilemma confronting mankind is employed, for the most part the prints and drawings exhibited are not specifically derived from the events of contemporary society. All of the works displayed are intended by the artists subtly to invite the viewer into a thoughtful, contemplative state of awareness—of himself and the larger role he plays as a social creature. Indeed, it is the universal expression of man's basic humanity which makes this exhibition significant for all persons who are genuinely interested in the continuing expansion of Western art.

## Charles White



*My work takes shape around images and ideas that are centered within the vortex of a black life experience, a nitty-gritty ghetto experience resulting in contradictory emotions: anguish, hope, love, despair, happiness, faith, lack of faith, dreams. Yet stubbornly holding on to an elusive romantic belief that the people of this land cannot always be insensible to the dictates of justice or deaf to the voice of humanity.<sup>1</sup>*

Charles White was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1918 and, as a young boy, painted reality as he knew it—the community in which he lived with its dilapidated buildings and its ghetto streets. This was White's "landscape" as the streets of New York were for the earlier American Ashcan School of painters. When he was fourteen years old, White became a professional sign painter, and in his last year of high school he was granted a year's scholarship at the Art Institute of Chicago. He later joined the Works Project Administration, and in 1940, when he was twenty-two, the young artist was commissioned to do a mural on the history of the American Negro Press.<sup>2</sup> The following year Charles White was the recipient of a Rosenwald grant which he used to go to the southern states where he made sketches for a mural depicting the development of the Negro in American history. The finished painting resulting from these sketches now hangs in the Hampton Institute in Virginia.<sup>3</sup> By 1947 White had his first one-man show in New York, and during the ensuing years his works have been widely exhibited and acquired by collectors and major museums throughout the United States and Europe. In 1956 he came to California and in 1965 began to instruct at the Otis Art Institute where he continues to teach the craft which has made him world renowned.

At seventeen, while studying at the Art Institute of Chicago, White made his first lithograph. Since that time, the artist acknowledged: "I've always been turned on by lithography, but there hasn't always been the opportunity to do it because of the physical difficulties involved. I haven't always had the availability of a press, but whenever I have had the opportunity, I've always been excited about lithographs."<sup>4</sup> One such opportunity came in 1966 when the artist was commissioned to execute *Exodus II* at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles. This work presents a monolithic image of a single figure and formally contrasts with the 1970 series of lithographs by the artist which integrates the two-dimensional background with the three-dimensional human image. The crouched figure found in two of last year's series of lithographs evolved from a related figure in White's earlier drawing, *Wanted Series #10*. This drawing depicts an infant in swaddling clothes and, above the Christ-like child, a horizontally-placed crouched figure convincingly integrated into the composition. Regarding this image

which later appears in the two lithographs, the artist stated:

*The concept of a crouched figure intrigued me when I did the initial drawing, and I thought that it would be very exciting to do a double image of it. You know, sometimes I want to explore the possibilities of a given image and investigate and possibly establish a new meaning for that image in a new medium.*

In contrast to his many years of experience in lithography, dry-point is a relatively new medium of expression for White who made *Matriarch*, his first print using this technique, in 1970. The artist originally planned to work in etching, but when he found that he could not safely expose himself to the acids necessary for this technique, he naturally turned to dry-point which does not depend upon chemicals to produce its effect. In this process a dry-point tool is employed to incise lines into a copper plate, thereby producing a "furrow" similar to those found in plowed fields. A dry-point "furrow" is called a "burr." This ridge of metal catches and holds the ink in the wiping of the plate for printing, creating an especially velvety and rich effect.

About his use of conté crayon or charcoal, Mr. White related:

*I begin to work lightly in halftones which I fix very strongly. I then work from that and fix another layer as I keep building up the composition. In this way, when I work with conté or charcoal, I can get very strong blacks because of the chemical reaction of the fixative to the medium that I'm working on top of. Using this method I can get a far more extensive range of values than I would ordinarily.*

As with all of his drawings, those executed by White in oil colors may take six weeks or sometimes even longer to create because the artist constructs his pictures very slowly and carefully, one layer upon another. His initial step, since he does not use models, is to establish his preliminary composition on heavy architectural tracing paper. The carefully devised composition is then transferred to the support which is often paper mounted on artificial board because, says the artist:

*I can go practically any size that I like to work on. Besides, I very often abuse a surface harshly since I scrub into it with rags and a lot of tools. For instance, in my monochromatic oil drawings, I use Q-tips, Kleenex, rags, balsa wood, brushes, and a whole slew of other things besides—all in one given work.*

Once his drawing is transferred to the mounted paper, White no longer refers to his preliminary tracing paper studies. He commences anew as if he had just started thereby insuring a spontaneity and a freshness in his

works which the mechanical transfer of his preliminary study would necessarily lose. In talking about his early work, Mr. White reminded the author that he had been primarily a painter, although he added:

*Drawing has always been a particularly exciting medium for me, and I've always felt that to think of one medium as superior to another or more important than another is a false concept. Lately I've been drawing in a monochromatic burnt umber, and though it is an oil color, I consider these works drawings because I approach them in the same manner as I do my drawings executed in other media.*

Because graphic images are more easily reproduced than paintings and, therefore, can more easily be disseminated to the public, Charles White, who has a profound respect and admiration for the human race, increasingly has turned to drawing as a means of communication. This desire to produce an art which the many rather than the few can enjoy also stems from the influence of another culture to the south of the United States, a culture which has deeply influenced the heritage of California in the past and is once again through Charles White transmitting its message of life and man.

It was in the late 1930's that White first became aware of Diego Rivera, who was then executing his murals in the United States:

*I found a strong affinity in terms of my goals as an artist and what they represented. And I could think of no better thing to happen to me than to have the opportunity to go to Mexico. And I never dreamed that I would. It just worked out.*

In later years White was invited to make prints at the internationally acclaimed *Taller de Gráfica* in Mexico City. He lived at that time with David Siqueiros and consequently met the other leading Mexican artists of the time such as Rivera and Orozco. This was in 1946 when foreign artists throughout the world were being invited as guests to partake of these prestigious facilities. Charles White was highly esteemed by his hosts; he stayed two years, and was invited to become a member of their group. Indeed, the admiration and respect of the Mexican people was reciprocated by White who was profoundly affected by this contact. At the Mexican graphic workshop the artists involved were primarily dealing with linoleum prints and lithography as a natural outgrowth of the earlier concept of Posada who was one of the world's greatest popular printmakers. It was also at this time, said White, that he realized:

*Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera and Orozco were doing the same thing as I, but in an even more social way than I was oriented to. . . . And for the first time I realized that*

*another ethnic group was drawing upon its culture, whereas previously I hadn't felt that strongly about it when I related to the art of John Sloan or George Luks. . . . And here was the more intimate way of a person whose life it was. He wasn't just the observer as the Ashcan School painters were. The Mexican artist was the participant, and this was another plateau for me to arrive at, and this was the first time that I became conscious of how I was actually relating to my own scene, but at the Taller de Gráfica they gave me the tools to articulate better, more so than the Ashcan School.*

Back in the United States White began to realize that most of the people who had purchased his art had been either upper middle class individuals or museums and that this had not been his intention:

*The primary audience that I was addressing myself to was really the masses of black people, and they were not turning out in hundreds to see my shows, and I had to find some way of reaching them, since my subject matter was related to them and should be made available to them, particularly in a national way.*

Later, when White was approached to have a portfolio of his drawings reproduced, he immediately recognized the offer as the opportunity he had been looking for. Consequently he created a suite of drawings especially for his 1953 *Portfolio of Six Drawings—The Art of Charles White*. This was followed by the 1961 *Portfolio 10/Charles White* and the 1964 *Portfolio 6/—Charles White*.

The themes that Mr. White explores center about the universal conflicts that involve all mankind. They include, among others, the relationship of man to man, social or economic dislocations, the opposition of love and hate, and the never-ending problems of justice and injustice. For, as the artist stated:

*I deal with ideas as an educator or a philosopher. This is my life's work, and I treat this responsibility very seriously. Consequently, I don't release works that I am not comfortable with myself, in the sense that I have fulfilled my responsibility of having dealt with an idea.*

*I am concerned about my fellow man. I am concerned with the survival of man. I am concerned with the progress that man has made in relation to his fellow man, in relation to nature, in trying to find a more beautiful way of life. . . . I am trying to fulfill my responsibility to myself and to express my gratitude for the privilege that I've had of living with my fellow man. I want to pour something into life—perhaps a little bit more than I've gotten out of it. Now that sounds awfully platitudinous, but that's really the way I feel about it.*



## David Hammons



*I feel that my art relates to my total environment —my being a black, political, and social human being. Although I am involved with communicating with others, I believe that my art itself is really my statement. For me it has to be.<sup>5</sup>*

David Hammons was born in 1943 in Springfield, Illinois and, finding his hometown rather small and dull, came to Los Angeles when he was twenty. Having seen so many Hollywood movies, he expected to find the landscape littered with skyscrapers and everyone living in apartment buildings, and with his arrival in Los Angeles in 1963 the misconception was quickly dispelled. After attending Los Angeles City College for a year, he transferred to the Los Angeles Trade-Technical College where he studied advertising art from 1966 to 1968 and simultaneously took evening and weekend classes at the Otis Art Institute. Then, according to the artist:

*I had my first commercial art job, and this blew my head off. I couldn't believe it—those deadlines and everything. Like, every job I did you had to put down the starting time and the ending time too. So I dropped out of that and went to Chouinard.*

When asked about those artists whom he considered as an influence on his own work, Hammons replied that he had taken a drawing class with Charles White at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles because:

*I never knew there were 'black' painters, or artists, or anything until I found out about him—which was maybe three years ago. There's no way I could have got the information in my art history classes. It's like I just found out a couple of years ago about Negro cowboys, and I was shocked about that.<sup>6</sup>*

In a more recent interview, Hammons stated of White:

*He's the only artist that I really related to because he is black and I am black, plus physically seeing him and knowing him. Like, he's the first and only artist that I've ever really met who had any real stature. And just being in the same room with someone like that you'd have to be directly influenced.<sup>7</sup>*

Before he studied with Charles White, David Hammons had become familiar with the senior artist's work through exhibitions and reproductions. He was especially drawn to White's figures with their exaggerated gestures, often enlarged hands, and generally unsmiling visages which, for Hammons, possess an "agonized" look:

*In most of Charles White's art there aren't too many people smiling, and I like that in his things. There's always an agonized kind of look, I think, because there aren't many*

*pleasant things in his past. He's gone through a lot of Hell. I know he has.*

Unlike White's pictures, which over the years have presented an heroic, idealized, and seemingly timeless panorama of humanity, the images in David Hammons' "body prints" appear to capture a single moment in time, as if, in many instances, they have been frozen in actual movement. Hammons has stated that he prefers to create his art without any message at all, feeling that messages are aesthetically restrictive.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, he is deeply affected by the events of our times:

*I just can't sit down with something political in mind and try to make something. I can't work like that. . . . I'm still political at times, but I don't want to be; but there are so many political issues that come up, and . . . they bother me.*

Contemporary events have already influenced Hammons' art which, on occasion, does seem to have political and/or social overtones. An example is *Black First, American Second* which results from the artist's belief that an American Negro for the sake of personal survival must consider himself first as a Negro and second as an American. Other works by Hammons, such as *Injustice Case*, refer to civil liberties abuses and political injustices. More often, however, Hammons' pictures border on the surreal. This is true of *Close Your Eyes and See Black* where various imprints of the artist's body are repeated and formally integrated to create a new vision which seems to inhabit the world of art alone.

The monotype technique, originated by G. B. Castiglione in the seventeenth century, was widely employed during the nineteenth century by many notable artists including Whistler, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Degas. A traditional monotype or monoprint is a single, unique impression made from an image which has been painted or drawn, often with printers' ink or oil paint, on a hard surface such as glass, wood, or metal. The actual print is achieved by placing a sheet of paper on the drawn image and then either running the paper and the "plate" through a press or, as one does for a woodblock print, rubbing the paper from behind to print the image. Like monoprints, Hammons' pictures are unique works of art. But, contrary to the traditional monotype technique, his "body prints" employ powdered pigments rather than oil paint or printers' ink, and the actual "plate" from which the artist prints is his own pliable body instead of a hard surface.

"I draw a lot from live models," Hammons recently stated, "because I'm really surprised how much it helps when I make 'body prints.' That's what I really love—drawing the

nude, and I've been doing this for about eight years now." Even so, he does not make a preliminary sketch for his prints, preferring to work directly on the smooth surface of illustration board which he finds especially responsive. As a preliminary step to "printing," the artist lightly coats his body, his clothing, and even his hair with margarine, having first selected the fabrics that he wears according to their physical structure:

*I generally try to use corduroy in all of my things because of the textures it produces. That's why I like to use my wife's lace tablecloths, since the 'body print' technique seems to recreate every thread.*

The artist has stated that in some of his pictures he has been able to reproduce even the veins in his body and the texture of his skin.

Having first coated with margarine those surfaces that he will "print," Hammons next presses his clothing and his body against the illustration board which he places either on the floor or on the wall depending on the intensity of the image he desires. A lighter impression is produced when the paper support is placed against the wall since this position enables Hammons to more easily control the pressure of his margarine-coated surfaces. One of the many difficulties involved in the production of "body prints" is the hazard of smudging the picture while it is being produced. This is especially the case when Hammons creates his images on the floor:

*When I lie down on the paper which is first placed on the floor, I have to carefully decide how to get up after I have made the impression that I want. Sometimes I lie there for perhaps three minutes or even longer just figuring out how I can get off the paper without smudging the image that I'm trying to print.*

Once he has physically disentangled himself from the illustration board, Hammons sifts powdered pigments through a strainer to make a fine mist that completely covers the work still in process. As the fine pigment slowly descends like a cloud of dust, the color is captured more intensely in those areas of the paper which have absorbed the "printed" margarine film. Simultaneously, the "unprinted" background of the paper often acquires a slight haze of color. This situation occurred in *Injustice Case* where the artist chose to erase the background around the "printed" image. However, when Hammons employs certain types of illustration board, such as the black board used in *Stars on Sleeve* and *Black First, American Second*, the white powdered pigment does not adhere to the background to any noticeable degree, and, therefore, it is not necessary for him to erase the background.

Like the pastel drawings of other artists, Hammons' "body prints" are sprayed with a fixative. But, unlike most pastel drawings which have a tendency to become less brilliant after being so treated, the colors of Hammons' prints, when sprayed with a fixative, tend to become more intense, especially when he uses oil-base rather than water-base pigments.

In many of his pictures, particularly those in which he utilizes the image of the American flag, Hammons combines "body printing" and the silkscreen technique:

*I always do the 'body print' first. Then I decide where the image of the flag will be. I must print in this sequence because the 'body print' technique is so uncertain as to how it will actually turn out.*

What is remarkable in his works is the superior formal and aesthetic unity that he is able to achieve while integrating two techniques. From a distance such works as *Stars on Sleeve* and *Black First, American Second* appear to have been produced by a single method of printmaking.

For David Hammons one of the main enjoyments of his craft is the element of "surprise":

*That's why I love printing, because there's a surprise. You really can't tell what you've got until you lift up the paper. You know, in painting you work with it, and you see the results as you are working so that you can't really see the picture when you're finished with it unless you put it away for a month or so. Then you can look at your painting again and see it from a different angle. And 'body printing' is no different as far as the element of surprise is concerned. Especially when I use cloth that I have wrapped around myself. I had no idea originally that all those wrinkles and all those folds would actually turn out like that. I just couldn't believe it. I still can't believe what I see sometimes.*

Hammons is constantly impelled to seek new means of expression. His most recent works have begun the rather complex investigations of multiple colors in a single "body print;" and he is, at present, considering working on a grand scale "where the artist is so small in relation to his work — like an architect looking up at a huge building that he designed." It was originally this same sort of adventurous search for new imagery that led David Hammons to develop the "body print" into a significant graphic expression.

## Timothy Washington



*I am dealing with message art: it is informative and relates to a poster in that it gives information. However, I want the information to be discovered; therefore the message is subtle. I try to ask questions and make the viewer think and in turn look closer.*

*I feel that there are no shortcuts in life. We have to stop and gather up bits of knowledge as we go along, to form a total. My separate, direct strokes—each line is an effort to form a whole.*

*I am not trying to change society but create an awareness, because awareness can curb or change reactions in the future.*

*I am also concerned with bringing people back to nature. I try to make people aware of plant and animal life.*

*I use simple shapes because modern society trends deal toward simplicity. The oval [circular] eyes are because they can capture several goals, beliefs, norms, and mysteries. They have a tendency to leave an imprint on your brain, or an after image. I am concerned with the effect my work leaves on people and their reactions. Each piece says something, whether for or against the establishment.*

*Technology has advanced, and I want to work with a material that says 'today.' I started working with aluminum because I wanted to work on a cold material. It is a challenge to create warmth from a cold, hard material.<sup>9</sup>*

Timothy Washington was born in the Watts area of Los Angeles in 1946. He relates that when he was in the third grade at the Virginia Road Elementary School and was working on a mural with the other students he had his first chance to really express himself through art. According to Washington:

*For some reason most of the other kids in the class weren't too interested in doing the mural, and so I had to do most of it. Surprisingly, the rest of the class was very much impressed.<sup>10</sup>*

Following this auspicious beginning Washington found himself in Mt. Vernon Junior High School and later in Dorsey High School. By the twelfth grade he recalls that, "I was the only one who had Life Drawing VII or VIII or whatever it was. Nearly everyone else in the class was taking Life Drawing I or II." As a senior in high school, he won a scholarship to the Chouinard Art School. This he renewed for four years until he graduated with a B.F.A. degree in 1969. While the artist was still attending Chouinard, his style was rapidly acquiring its now distinctive mark.

He was even then "redesigning" the human figure. "I would change the way I saw things," he related, "to give the picture more visual impact." And, in the latter part of 1967 a class assignment was given that was to change the course of Washington's future:

*I was in class, and our problem was to do something that we would consider very personal. And I think it was the very same day that I went home and found that I was reclassified for the draft as 1-A. So, I knew that I was going to make something relating to the army or war. I wanted to work on a substance that was cold and hard, and I thought of aluminum as a material that I would like to work on. The first piece that I did on aluminum was a triptych which was a social commentary against wars.*

A technique present in the artist's first aluminum picture is still found in his later works. Washington initially sprays a sheet of aluminum with enamel paint and then carefully scratches the plate with an etching needle. Most artists would consider this a "dry-point" technique, would ink the resultant plate, and would print from it. This, however, is not the case for Timothy Washington though he is fully aware that he could print from many of these engraved plates:

*But I also feel that if I tried to print from them they would lose a great deal. I like them as they exist right now without trying to print from them, because paper says a certain thing to me, and aluminum says another, and to print on paper would take away from the luminous quality you have in aluminum.*

Washington is no stranger to traditional printmaking, having practiced etching, dry-point, and silkscreen techniques, but even as a student he discovered:

*When I had an etching class, the plate seemed much more fascinating to me than the print itself. And I wondered about boundaries in art. Why should the plate be considered something to use to make a paper print when I loved the plate so much more? The plate said so much more to me because it had me within it.*

Ignoring artificial boundaries in art, Washington has created many recent dry-point engravings on aluminum panels which combine with other materials to create complex pictorial collages. *Raw Truth*, *Why Poverty?* and *Ghetto* are all examples of his efforts to combine various media. *Raw Truth* integrates a sculptural section of a wooden yoke for cattle into a composition of a standing figure and an exquisitely drawn cow. *Why Poverty?*



incorporates an actual wheel of a child's wagon into the physical structure of the picture. *Ghetto* is still another example of the artist's juxtaposition of different materials—in this case leather against metal. The figure in this picture is that of a woman whose extended left arm holds a rat and from whose neck protrudes the head of a cat. The woman's hair is made from a ragged leather baseball mitt. In talking about his mixed-media pieces, Washington stated:

*In these works there's a large amount of hand sanding and construction. In some pieces like Exist I have formed the metal itself. That whole piece was aluminum, and I sanded and worked back and forth and shaped the breasts with a hammer. And in much of my work there are some areas that are often painted on, and there are also so many applications of other materials that I don't think they can really be called drawings or even given a specific label because they seem to go so much beyond any specific category.*

Even when Washington's dry-point engravings incorporate sculptural elements, they remain unquestionably pictorial because there is always a sense of containment. This stems largely from the artist's respect for the framing edge of his pictures. In describing his collage-approach to his metal engravings, Washington said:

*It seems to me that if you incorporate different media into one work, the visual impact will be greater because you begin to see form. Also, I can incorporate the differences of the cold metal and the warmth of leather. I feel that by using all of these materials it will, hopefully, 'pull the viewer in.' Just as there are differences in life today, I feel that some of these differences can be applied to art.*

This artist has chosen to work with the figure because it allows him to communicate more easily with his audience. He considers his role as a creator to require him to comment on issues and events of the present and the past. This he does as gently as possible because one of his basic premises is that most people "resent being told anything" and have a better chance of re-examining their thinking if they can make their own discoveries. He believes that by referring subtly in his pictures to present and past events he will create messages with a timeless quality:

*Often, I comment about things of the past, but I try to bring things up to date in a manner which will be significant for today, although the event itself may have occurred in the past. I believe that something like the Bible may talk about things*

*of the past, but it also has messages that can be related to today.*

Washington's pictures also employ highly personal symbols. For example, the cattle yoke incorporated into *Raw Truth* represents to him an aspect of the past which can be re-interpreted in our own time. Contemporary society is represented in this work by a figure which is bending a stick:

*I feel that a given society or the system that we live in can only bear a certain amount of pressure before it breaks down. That's why in Raw Truth there is the bending of the stick. The cow in relation to the figure applies to life itself and its relationship to knowledge. The cow demands a certain amount of responsibility, and in return we get milk from it. This is a give-and-take situation which I feel should be applied to life.*

That the highly personal content of Washington's works is somewhat elusive does not disturb the artist who feels that if his work stimulates thought of any kind, it has succeeded. For those persons who know and love the graphic arts—especially when they utilize highly accomplished and sophisticated draftsmanship—Timothy Washington's enigmatic pictures should easily provide the aesthetic stimulation and enjoyment which we experience from much of the significant graphic art of the past.

Joseph E. Young

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Charles White, "Wanted Poster Series," portfolio of drawings (Los Angeles: Heritage Gallery, 1970).

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Horowitz, "Images of Dignity: The Drawings of Charles White," in *Charles White Drawings* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University, 1967) p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Unless otherwise cited, all remarks by the artist are from an interview with the author on December 16, 1970.

<sup>5</sup>Statement prepared by David Hammons especially for this catalog.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph E. Young, "Los Angeles," *Art International*, XIV (October 20, 1970), p. 74.

<sup>7</sup>All statements by David Hammons in this essay are taken from interviews the artist granted the author on May 2, 1970 and December 28, 1970. Portions of the first interview have been published in "Los Angeles," *Art International*, XIV (October 20, 1970), p. 74.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>9</sup>Statement prepared by Timothy Washington especially for this catalog.

<sup>10</sup>Unless otherwise cited, all remarks by the artist are from an interview with the author on December 26, 1970.

*Charles White*

- 1 ROOTS, 1964  
Ink drawing, 36½" x 53½"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Payson Wolff
- 2 NOW I LAY DOWN MY HEAVY LOAD, 1964  
Chinese ink, 47½" x 28"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Sinaike
- 3 MICAH, 1964  
Linocut, 48" x 39"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. George Slaff
- 4 I'M ON MY WAY TO CANAAN, 1964  
Charcoal drawing, 51" x 40"  
Private Collection, Los Angeles
- 5 SATURDAY'S CHILD, 1965  
Ink drawing, 67½" x 41½"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Hoffman
- 6 J'ACCUSE #1, 1966  
Charcoal drawing, 50" x 36"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Bertram V. Karpf
- 7 J'ACCUSE #2, 1966  
Charcoal drawing, 34" x 24"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Jack L. Stein
- 8 J'ACCUSE #5, 1966  
Charcoal drawing, 50" x 36"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Ernst Plesset
- 9 J'ACCUSE #7, 1966  
Charcoal drawing, 48" x 60"  
Lent by Mrs. Lee Graff
- 10 J'ACCUSE #8, 1966  
Charcoal drawing, 42" x 51½"  
Lent by Mr. Lawrence Roberts
- 11 PAPER SHELTER, 1967  
Mixed-media drawing, 48" x 60"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William Cosby, Jr.
- 12 I HAVE A DREAM SERIES #3, 1968  
Charcoal drawing, 48" x 60"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. Seigel
- 13 I HAVE A DREAM SERIES #5, 1968  
Charcoal drawing, 15" x 15¾"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Irving Monarch
- 14 SEED OF LOVE, 1969  
Ink drawing, 51" x 36"  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Museum Acquisition Fund
- 15 WANTED POSTER SERIES #7, 1970  
Oil drawing, 38" x 48"  
Lent by Heritage Gallery, Los Angeles  
Forum Gallery, New York

- 16 WANTED POSTER SERIES #10, 1970  
Oil drawing, 40" x 60"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Edmund W. Gordon
- 17 WANTED POSTER SERIES #16, 1970  
Oil drawing, 60" x 40"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. William C. Wright
- 18 WANTED POSTER SERIES #17, 1971  
Oil drawing, 60" x 30"  
Lent by Heritage Gallery, Los Angeles

*David Hammons*

- 19 EAST SIDE WEST SIDE, 1969  
Body print, 40" x 30"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andy Bookman
- 20 A CRY FROM THE INSIDE, 1969  
Body print, 30" x 40"  
Lent by Bettye Saar
- 21 MAN IN GRASS, 1970  
Body print, 52" x 34"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 22 MULTI-COLORED FIGURE, 1970  
Body print, 40" x 32"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 23 BLACK FIRST, AMERICAN SECOND, 1970  
Body print and silkscreen, 40" x 30"  
Collection of the Artist
- 24 DRINKER, 1970  
Body print, 40" x 30"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 25 CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SEE BLACK, 1970  
Body print, 37" x 26"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Davis
- 26 STARS ON SLEEVE, 1970  
Body print and silkscreen, 28" x 19"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 27 BLUE FEMALE FIGURE, 1970  
Body print, 60" x 40"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 28 SEXY SUE, 1970  
Body print, 60" x 40"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 29 INJUSTICE CASE, 1970  
Mixed-media, 63" x 40½"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 30 SPADE, 1970  
Body print and silkscreen, 53¼" x 35¼"  
Lent by Mr. Alan Sieroty

*Timothy Washington*

- 31 INTRODUCTION TO LIFE, 1969  
Engraving on aluminum, 36" x 36"  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. George Sealy
- 32 INTRODUCTORY TITLE, 1969  
Engraving on aluminum, 36" x 36"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 33 RAW TRUTH, 1970  
Mixed-media, 35" x 35"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 34 EXIST, 1970  
Mixed-media, 35" x 35"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 35 INQUISITIVE PRESENTATION, 1970  
Engraving on aluminum, 30" x 20"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 36 PRECAUTION, 1970  
Engraving on aluminum, 35" x 35"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 37 WHY POVERTY?, 1970  
Mixed-media, 36" x 36"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 38 PARAKEETS, 1970  
Engraving on aluminum, 35" x 35"  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Museum Acquisition Fund
- 39 ONE NATION UNDER GOD, 1970  
Engraving on aluminum and added color,  
35" x 48"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 40 GHETTO, 1970  
Mixed-media, 35" x 35"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles
- 41 LIBERTY, 1971  
Engraving on aluminum, 35" x 35"  
Lent by Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
January 26, 1971–March 7, 1971

Santa Barbara Museum of Art  
March 20, 1971–April 18, 1971